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Dan Slott Ryan Sook Jim Royal

ARKHAM ASYLUM

LIVING HELL



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A STITCH IN TIME

CHAPTER
THREE:



Cracked Up

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"GONE TO ARKHAM, BACK AFTER LUNCH." WHAT WAS I THINKING?!

YOU SAY SOMETHING?

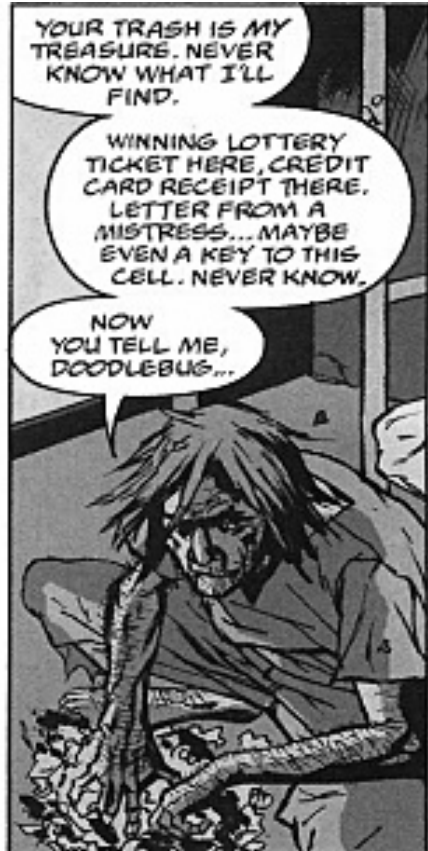
JUST REFLECTING. IT WAS THE LAST THING I SCRAWLED WHEN I WAS ON THE OUTSIDE.



I THINK THAT LITTLE BIT OF BRAVADO "EARNED" ME A CELL WITH YOU...

...THE JUNKYARD DOG, THE MOST FOUL SMELLING CON IN ALL OF ARKHAM.

I DON'T GET IT. WHAT'S THE APPEAL? WHY SPEND ALL YOUR TIME STEALING AND HOARDING TRASH?



YOUR TRASH IS MY TREASURE. NEVER KNOW WHAT I'LL FIND.

WINNING LOTTERY TICKET HERE, CREDIT CARD RECEIPT THERE, LETTER FROM A MISTRESS... MAYBE EVEN A KEY TO THIS CELL. NEVER KNOW.

NOW YOU TELL ME, DOODLEBUS...



HOW DOES AN URBAN-TAGGER RATE "CRIMINAL INSANITY"?

WHEN HE PUTS ART BEFORE LIFE. ANY LIFE. YOURS. EVEN MINE.

I FOLLOW MY MUSE. FOLLOW IT RIGHT OFF A CLIFF, IF THAT'S WHERE IT'S TAKING ME.



AND IT DOES TAKE ME PLACES. TOOK ME OFF THE STREETS. TOOK ME TO THE BEST ART GALLERIES IN GOTHAM.

AND TONIGHT, IT'S TAKING ME OUT OF THIS CELL.



CHOOM

DOODLEBUS! C'MON, IT'S NOW OR NEVER.

I GOT HEAD CHECK TONIGHT. THAT GIVES YOU TWENTY MINUTES TOPS...



I GOT THE SECURITY CAMERAS ON A LOOP. SEE?

CLEVER, MR. WRIGLEY. SO NO ONE CAN SEE A THING WE'RE DOING?

NOT IN THE HERE AND NOW. FOR THE NEXT HALF-HOUR, ANYBODY CHECKING IN IS LIVING IN THE PAST.

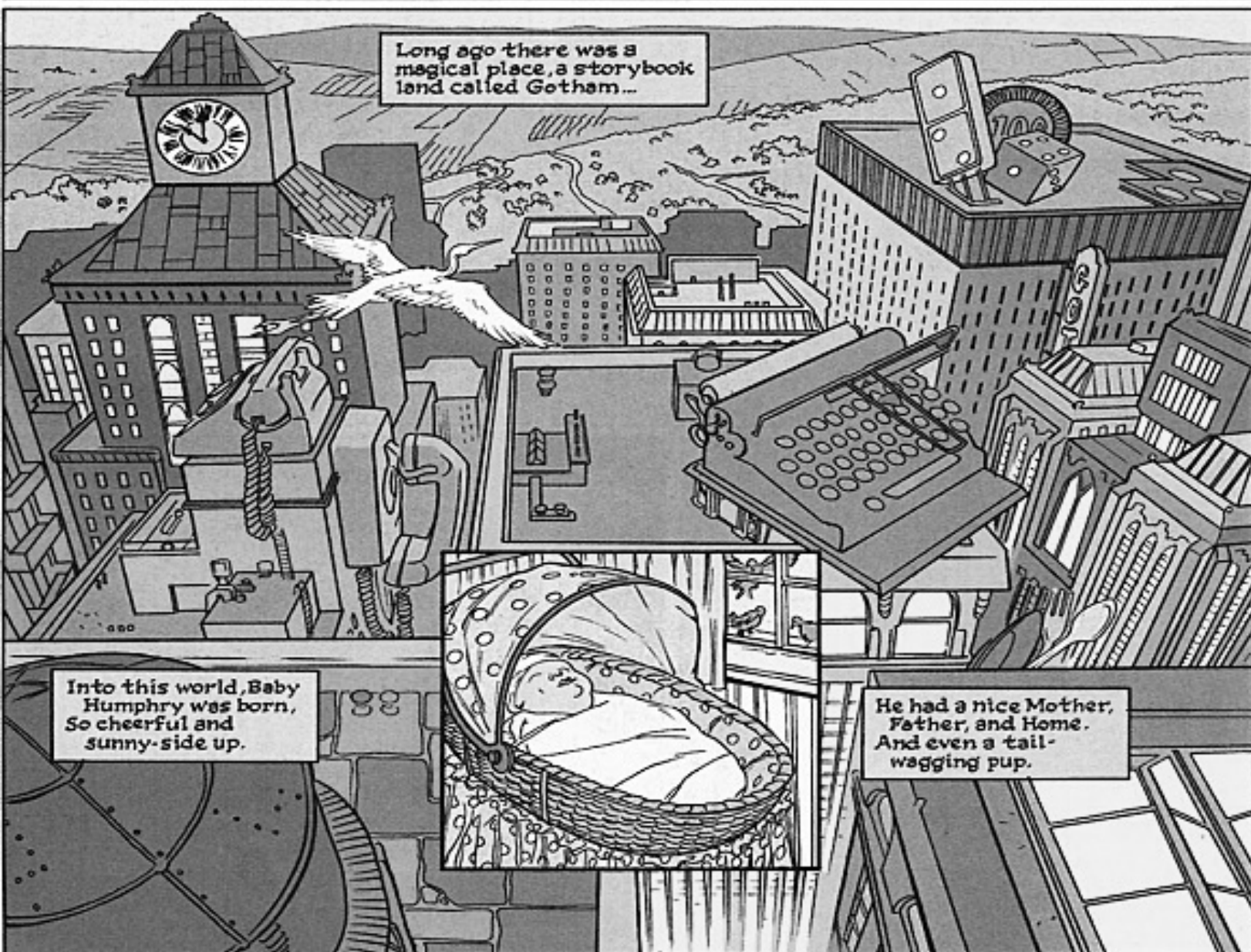
...IT'S NOT LIKE
I DID ANYTHING THAT
WRONG. IS IT MY FAULT
JOE SIXPACK CAN'T
READ A PROSPECTUS?

THE CRAZY THING
WAS JUST A DODGE.
THOUGHT THE WORST
A GUY LIKE ME COULD
GET WAS CLUB FED!
NOT THIS!

SO HOW DID
YOU WIND UP HERE,
DUMPTY? WHAT'S
YOUR STORY?

YOU WANT TO
HEAR MY STORY,
MR. FISH?
REALLY?

O-O-KAY...
LET ME
SEE...

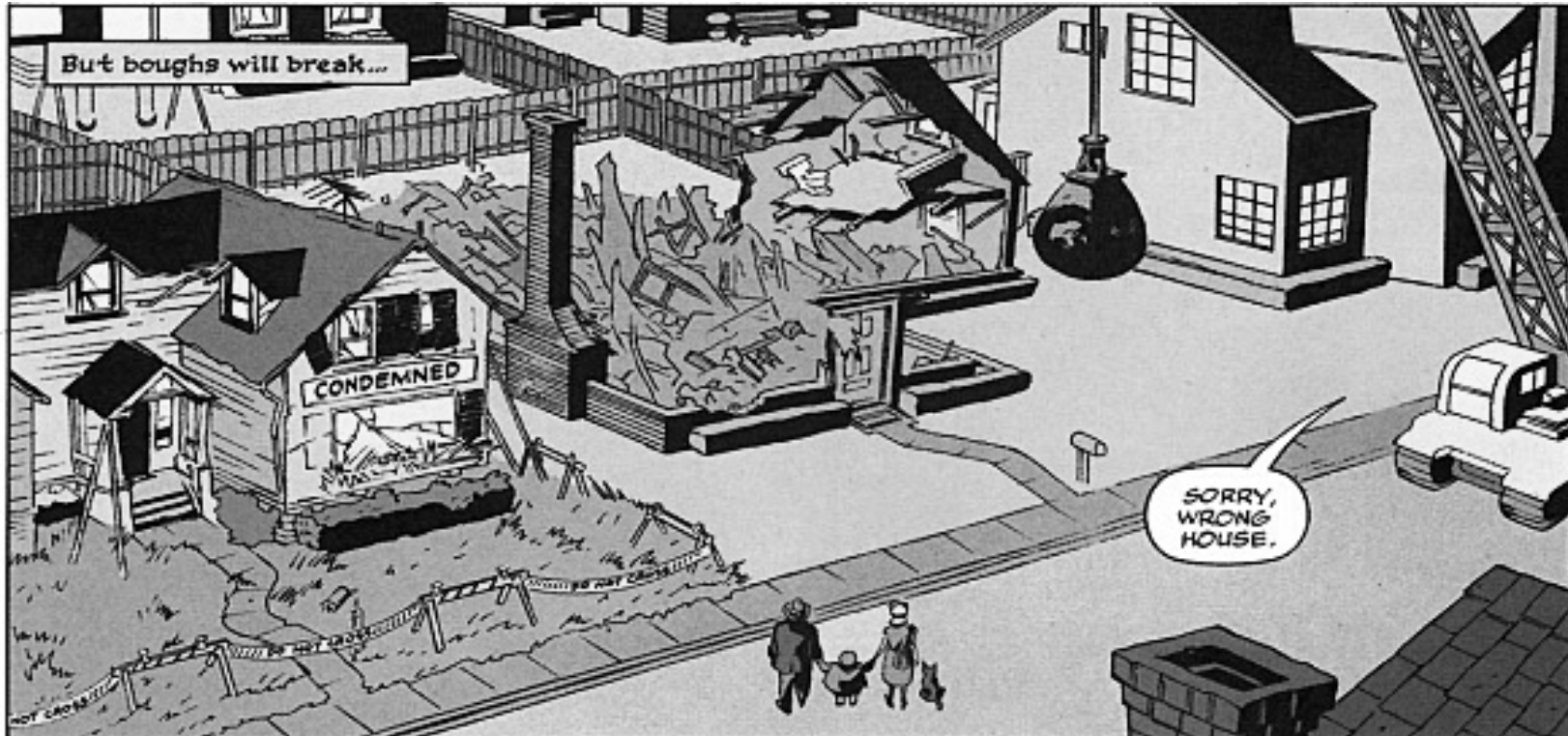


Long ago there was a
magical place, a storybook
land called Gotham...

Into this world, Baby
Humphry was born,
So cheerful and
sunny-side up.

He had a nice Mother,
Father, and Home.
And even a tail-
wagging pup.

But boughs will break...

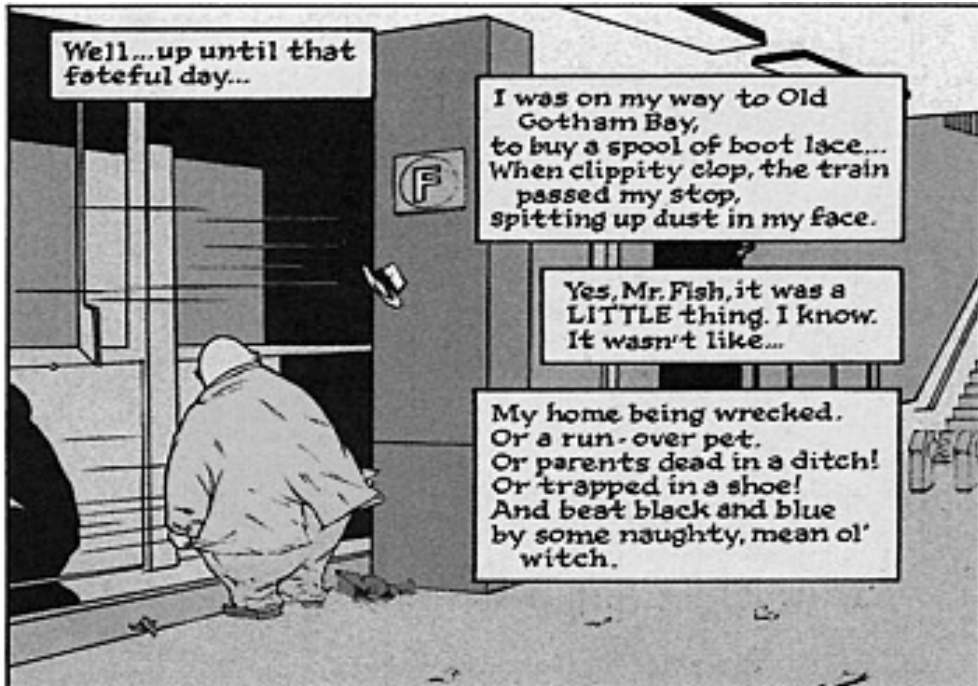




Honestly, Mr. Fish, after a while I grew to accept these little bumps in my path.

"After all," I thought, "if life is ALWAYS getting worse, then right now is NEVER all bad?"

A happy thought that served me well...



Well...up until that fateful day...

I was on my way to Old Gotham Bay, to buy a spool of boot lace... When clippity clop, the train passed my stop, spitting up dust in my face.

Yes, Mr. Fish, it was a LITTLE thing. I know. It wasn't like...

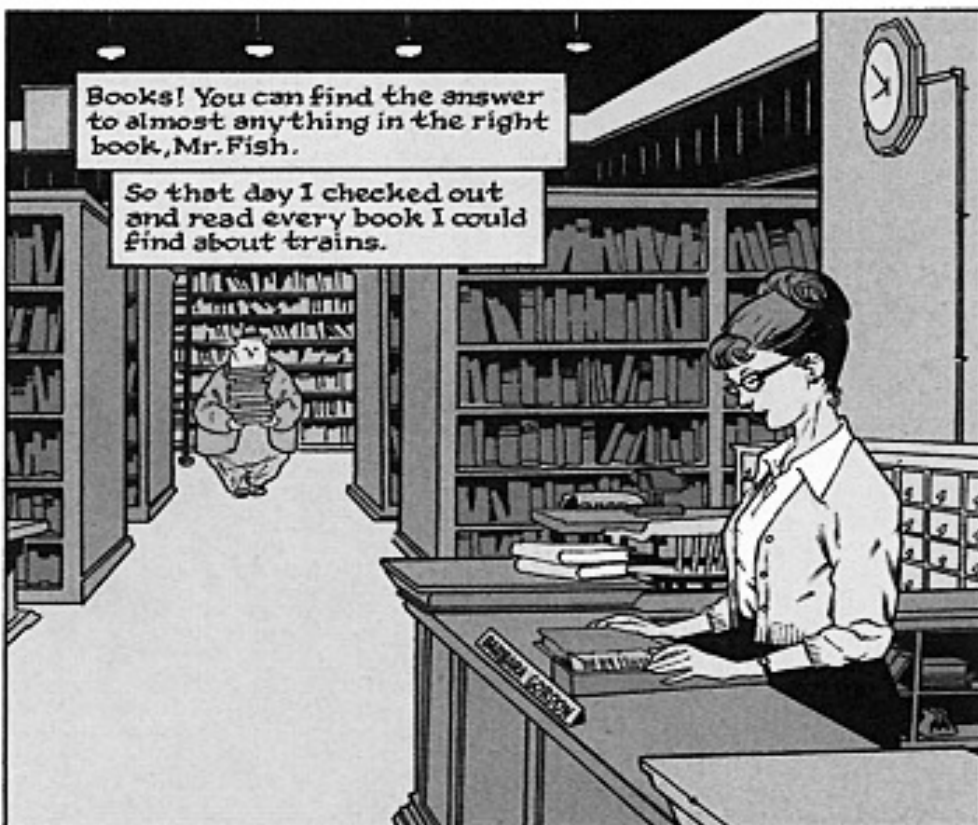
My home being wrecked. Or a run-over pet. Or parents dead in a ditch! Or trapped in a shoe! And beat black and blue by some naughty, mean ol' witch.



But it was SOMETHING. And over time a little something can become that ONE thing.

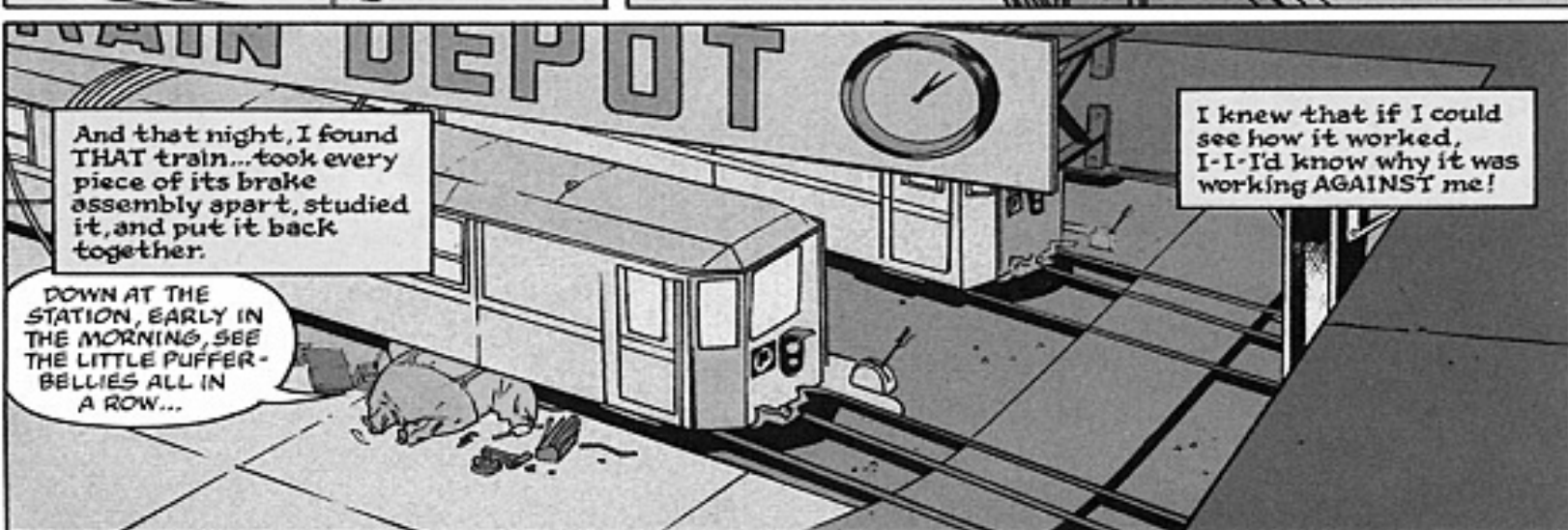
And you just have to know WHY?! Why does this happen to ME?!

Lucky for me, there was a place that had ALL the answers.



Books! You can find the answer to almost anything in the right book, Mr. Fish.

So that day I checked out and read every book I could find about trains.



And that night, I found THAT train...took every piece of its brake assembly apart, studied it, and put it back together.

DOWN AT THE STATION, EARLY IN THE MORNING, SEE THE LITTLE PUFFER-BELLIES ALL IN A ROW...

I knew that if I could see how it worked, I-I-I'd know why it was working AGAINST me!

And do you know what, Mr. Fish? The next day, that train rushed right past my stop again!

This time, though, it flew right off the rails. Made a horrible mess.

I TRIED TO GET EVERYONE OFF IN TIME...

IT'S OKAY, BATGIRL. THE PARAMEDICS ARE SAYING EVERYONE SHOULD PULL THROUGH.

WE WERE JUST LUCKY YOU WERE ON BOARD.

WELL, THIS LINE IS ON MY WAY TO W-- WHERE I WAS GOING.

My luck was finally changing.

It was a GOOD THING that train hadn't let me on THAT day.

AFTER ALL, MOST OF THE PEOPLE ON THAT TRAIN WERE CRIPPLED FOR LIFE.

VERY SAD, BUT THESE THINGS HAPPEN.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO DO THIS...

...BE QUICK ABOUT IT.

DON'T RUSH ME. I'M AN ARTIST.

SPEAKING OF WHICH?

ONE DOODLEBUG SELF-PORTRAIT. PUT IT UP ON EBAY AND IT'LL PUT YOUR DAUGHTER THROUGH COLLEGE.

SHE'S NOT MY DAUGHTER. AND IT'S NO COLLEGE.

HEH. YOU'RE GOOD PEOPLE.



WHY, WHAT HAVE WE HERE? A GENTLEMAN CALLER?

SO WHAT DO YOU WANT? TOP OR BOTTOM?

I'LL TAKE WHAT'S ON THE TOP BUNK, IVY.



YOU SURE I COULDN'T TEMPT YOU WITH A LITTLE KISS?

SUUUUURE. WITH YOUR POISONOUS LIPPAGE, A KISS WOULD BE A TRIP, ALL RIGHT.

A ONE-WAY TRIP! I'LL STICK WITH MS. MAGPIE.



HA. NOT SO FAST.

THIS PRETTY BIRD DOESN'T GIVE IT AWAY FOR FREE.



I KNOW YOUR PRICE, LADY.

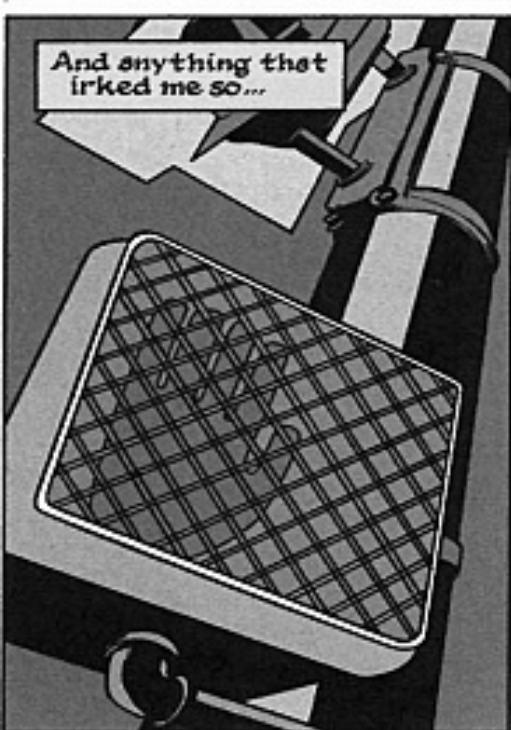
MAGPIE LIKES ALL THE SHINY THINGS. BITS AND BAUBLES THAT TWINKLE IN THE MOONLIGHT.

Ooh! SPARKLY.



sigh

I GOTTA GET MY OWN PLACE.



It was a glorious time, Mr. Fish. Every problem became a chance to break a thing down and learn how its insides worked.

But there was one time when the THING learned something about ME.



MY CARD.
IT ATE MY
CARD.

NEED MONEY
FOR A SPOOL OF
THREAD! MONEY
FOR A NEEDLE!

THAT'S
THE WAY THE
MONEY GOES...

I took that cash machine
apart that night. And
put it back together.

And the very
next day...



DON'T JUST SIT THERE,
YOU WORTHLESS LUMP!
GO OUT'N GRAB SOME
A' THAT CASH!

BUT GRANDMA,
THAT'D B-B-BE
WRONG.



My Grandma wasn't
the only one who
was mad at me.

You see, I forgot that
most of those banking
machines had cameras...



The next day...

Gotham Gazette
HUMPTY DUMPTY
SUPER SABOTEUR



My picture ran
upstairs, downstairs,
all around the town.



THEY CALLED ME
"HUMPTY DUMPTY, THE
SUPER SABOTEUR OF
GOTHAM."

I was in big trouble,
Mr. Fish. And I didn't
know what to do...

WRINGLESLEY.
OMMM, MR.
WRINGLESLEY.

I HEAR YOU
SKULKING ABOUT
OUT THERE. C'MON!
I NEED A
FAVOR.

YOU SHUT IT
RIGHT NOW, DOE! I
DON'T DO FAVORS
FOR NUTJOBS LIKE
YOU!

REALLY? YOU DID BACK
WHEN YOU THOUGHT I
WAS "ANNE CARVER."

IN FACT, YOU DO
FAVORS FOR INMATES
ALL THE TIME.

I WONDER WHAT MR.
CASH WOULD SAY IF
HE FOUND OUT YOU
WERE THE ONE
SMUGGLING CON-
TRABAND INTO
ARKHAM...

THAT'S IT,
FREAK. YOU JUST
BOUGHT YOURSELF
A WORLD O'
TROUBLE!

I KNOW DOZENS
OF WAYS TO HURT
YOU--WITHOUT
EVEN LEAVING
A MARK!

I KNOW. I'VE
BEEN STUDYING
YOU.

I had to get out
of there, Mr. Fish.

SO I SPENT EVERY
CENT, EVERY BILL,
AND LAST NOTE.

FOR A TRIP
OUT TO SEA IN A WEE
PEA GREEN BOAT
READY TO SET SAIL
THAT DAY.

There was no going home once I left for the dock.
Too excited to sleep, I stared out at the clock
across from Old Gotham Bay.



There were no fond farewells as I went to the pier.
I was ready to go, but to my greatest fear
my wee ship had sailed away.



That rotten clock tower
was off by an hour.
I would have to set it right!



Climbing up to the gears
I held back all my tears
And wound the works good and tight...



But when the clock struck one
The real trouble begun
As one of the hands took flight...



There were crashes...

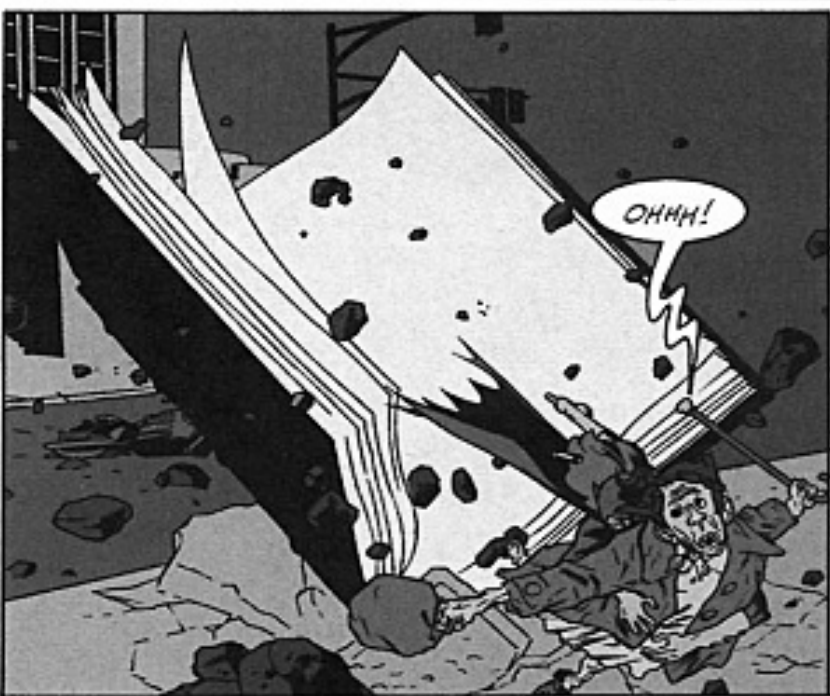
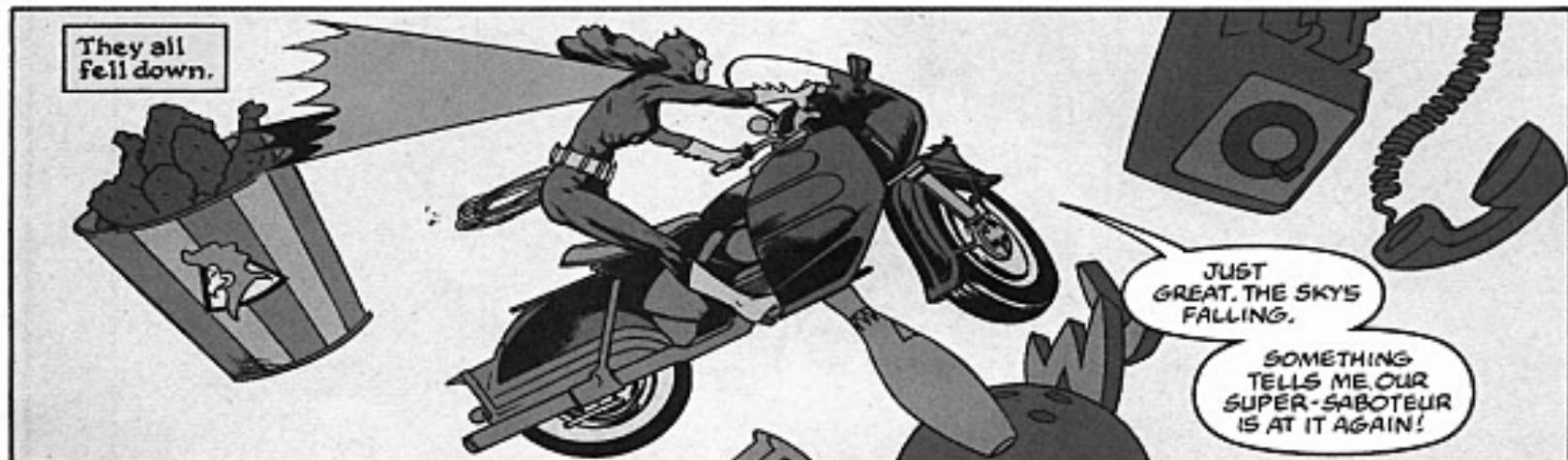
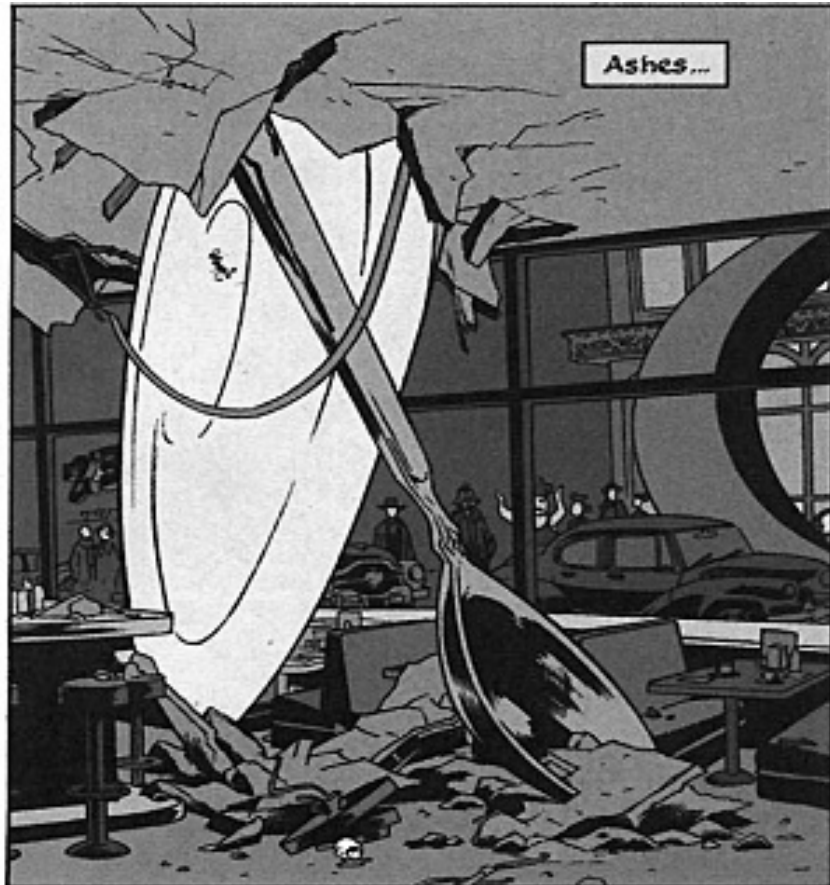


Crashes...



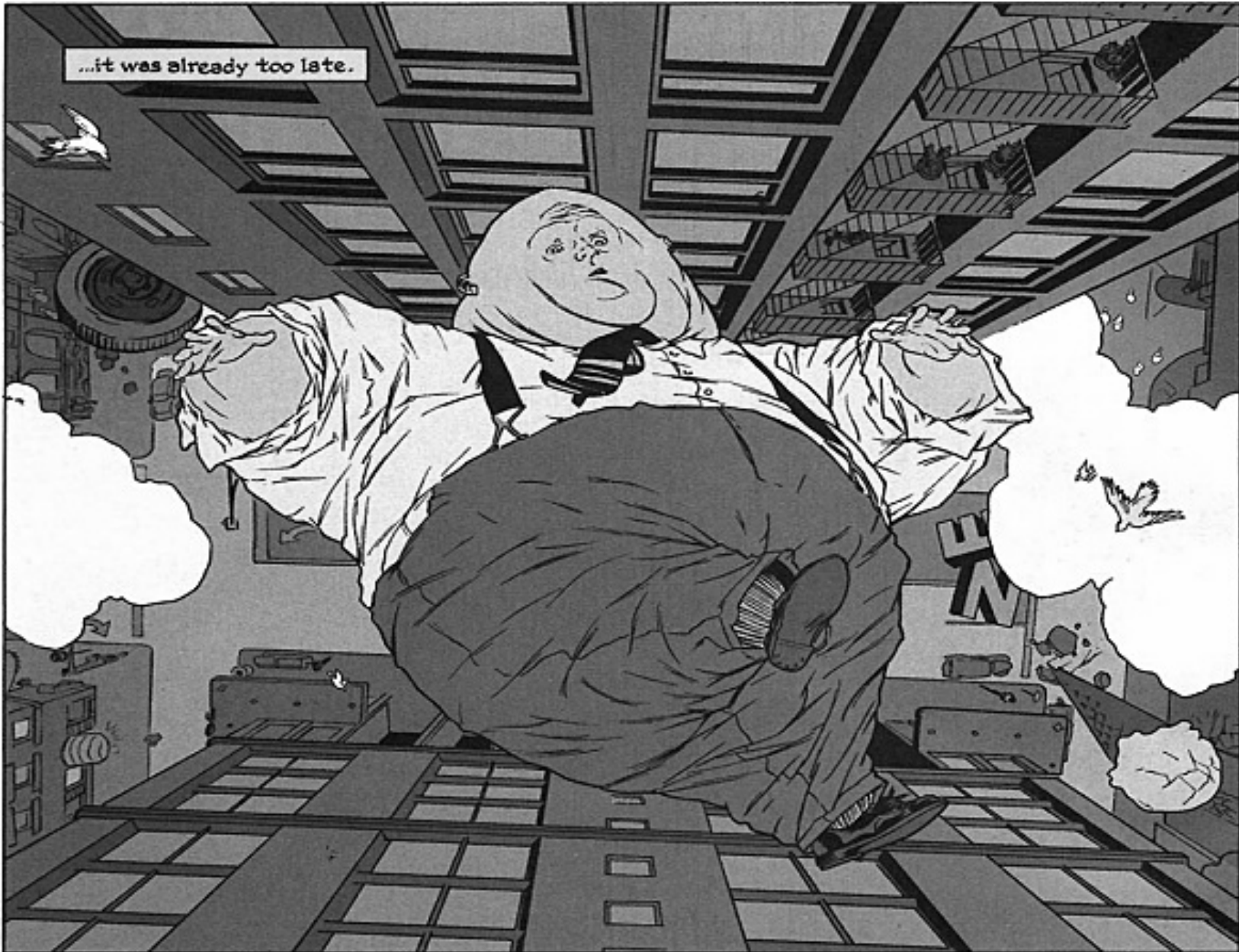
Through all
Gotham Town.







...it was already too late.



NICE LITTLE
TASTE OF HEAVEN
BACK THERE.

WELL, IT'S
BACK TO EARTH
FOR YOU, BUG.

SLEEP
TIGHT, DON'T
LET YOUR CELL
MATE BITE.



FUNNY. I THINK THAT
GETS BETTER EVERY
TIME YOU TELL IT.



WHATEVER.

HEY,
THE DOOR
DIDN'T--





Pulled both her arms out of her sockets. She just hung there like a little rag dolly.



GET AWAY FROM ME! DON'T--



Good thing I was there to put her back together.

ARGHHH!



Batgirl had figured out who I was and where I lived by looking at my outstanding library fines.



ONLY ONE PERSON IN GOTHAM USED THE PUBLIC LIBRARY TO CHECK OUT BOOKS...

...ON TRAINS, ELEVATORS, ROADWAYS, BANKING AND CLOCKS.

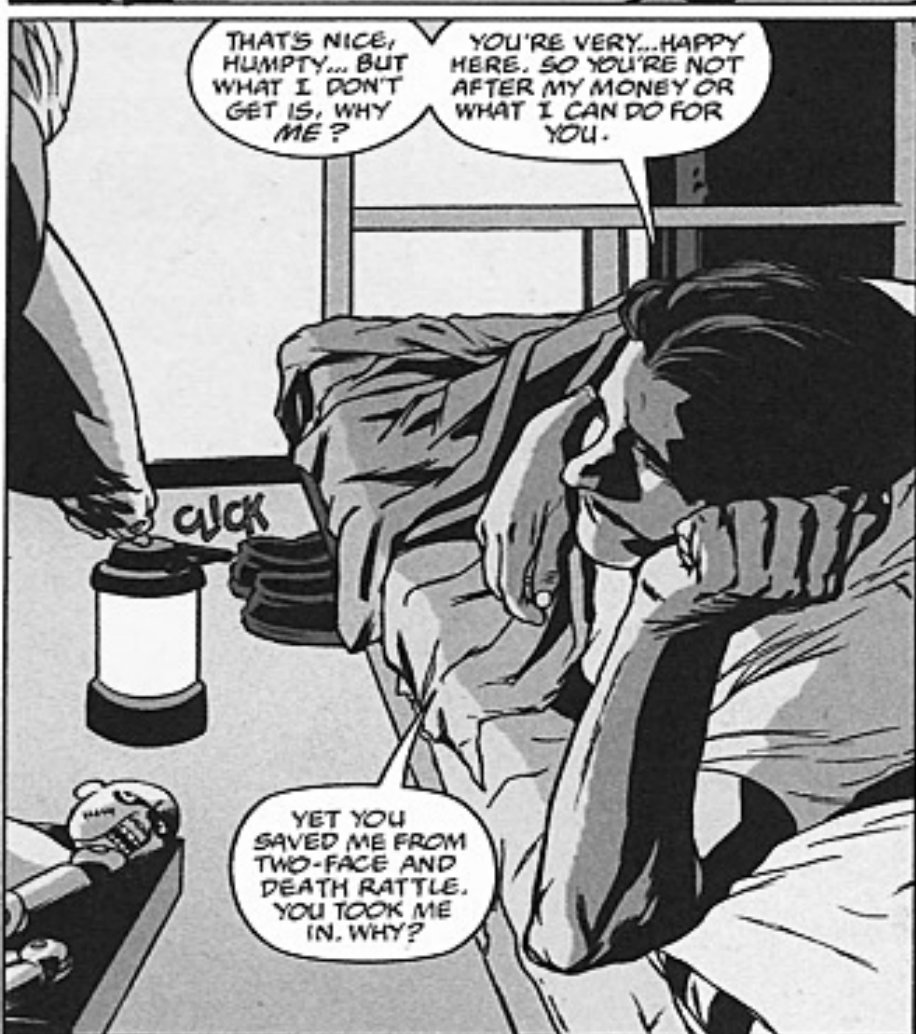
BUT I HAD TO KNOW, MR. DUMPLER, WHY DID YOU CHECK OUT A COPY OF GRAY'S ANATOMY? WHY?!

She asked nice enough. So I took her home and showed her.

OH DEAR GOD.



It was for Grandma, of course. She was just SO awful. Something inside her HAD to be broken. So I took her apart and put her back together again.







PLEASE, EXCUSE
SERGEANT BULLOCK.
I BELIEVE THIS CASE
IS MORE SUITED TO MY
FIELD OF EXPERTISE.

THAT IS WHY
YOU CALLED ME
IN, YES?

YES. AT FIRST
WE THOUGHT WE WERE
DEALING WITH SOME
KIND OF SERIAL
KILLER...



BUT WE
COULDN'T FIND
ANY LINK
BETWEEN THE
VICTIMS.

THEY'RE FROM ALL
PARTS OF THE CITY, ALL
KINDS OF ECONOMIC
BACKGROUND, AGE, RACE,
RELIGION AND
ORIENTATION.



YOU'RE RIGHT ON ONE
COUNT. THIS *ISN'T* THE
WORK OF A SERIAL
KILLER. THESE SLAYINGS
ARE RITUALISTIC, OCCULT
IN NATURE.

BUT YOU'RE
WRONG ABOUT THE
VICTIMS. THEY DO
HAVE SOMETHING
IN COMMON.

REALLY? AND
WHAT WOULD
THAT BE, MR.
BLOOD?



SIN,
DOCTOR.



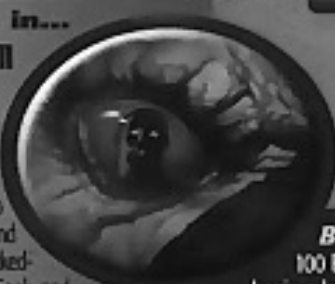
THEY'VE ALL
COMMITTED THE
SAME SIN.

NEXT
tic
toe

This Month's Cover by...
ERIC POWELL

Next Month in...
Arkham Asylum
Living Hell #4

Someone at the Asylum has left all the cell doors open! Now Dr. Arkham and the guards are left to face a horde of a thousand maniacs...including a ticked-off Killer Croc! By Slott, Sook, and Von Grabenbadger.



"Azzarello and Risso take Batman down the darkest alleys of his mind."
— BATMAN Editor Bob Schreck

TAKING AIM AT BATMAN



BATMAN #620

100 BULLETS top guns Brian Azzarello and Eduardo Risso set their sights on the legend of the Dark Knight when they begin a landmark six-month run on BATMAN. Solving the murder of a child's parents forces Batman to revisit the tragic night that created him, where the most shocking discovery of all awaits. The mystery behind the mythos unravels in BATMAN #620 this October.

Hot List

**FORMERLY KNOWN AS
THE JUSTICE
LEAGUE #1 OF 6**

This new miniseries by Keith Giffen, J.M. DeMatteis, Kevin Maguire and Joe Rubinstein reunites the creative team behind the classic '80s JUSTICE LEAGUE!



**SUPERMAN:
BIRTHRIGHT #1 OF
12**

Mark Waid returns to DC as Laila Yu makes his DCU debut! Everyone knows Jor-El sent his infant son to Earth to avoid death on Krypton...this story takes a closer look at Jor-El's emotional struggles with the decision.



TEEN TITANS #1

DC's hottest new super-team debuts, featuring guest appearances by Superman, Batman, The Flash, and Jay Garrick! What do teenaged superheroes do on the weekends? They hang with the Teen Titans!



EMPIRE #1

Mark Waid, Barry Kitson, and James Pascoe continue the Empire saga with a bold new start! The unstoppable tyrant Gollgoth and his conquering armies have eradicated every significant military force on Earth, bringing the world into the grasp of a dictator.



PROS & CONS

Pack up your sketchbook — this summer DC dominates the convention circuit, starting with the Comic-Con International held inside the San Diego Convention Center July 17-20. With over 63,000 attendees in 2002, expect an even bigger and better show this year, yet when you consider the scheduled lineup we're bringing to this party — 100 BULLETS' Brian Azzarello and Eduardo Risso,

Ed Brubaker (CATWOMAN), Mike Carey (LUCIFER), GOTHAM CENTRAL's Michael Lark, Geoff Johns and Mike McKone (TEEN TITANS), Judd Winick of OUTSIDERS, HAWKMAN's Rags Morales, Kevin O'Neill (LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN), Carlos Pacheco, Jimmy Palmiotti, Jill Thompson, and FABLES' Bill Willingham — there's really only one booth worth visiting. Stop by and say hi! Comic-Con International is also the home of the prestigious **Will Eisner Awards**, and who else but yours truly leads the pack of publishers with 23 nominations? Bill Willingham's FABLES capped off a storybook year for Vertigo, garnering the most nods with four (Best New and Continuing Series, Best Serialized Story and Best Writer), while GOTHAM CENTRAL earned Best Writer nominations for both Ed Brubaker and Greg Rucka,

plus Best Penciller/Inker for Michael Lark. Lark shares the nomination for his work on BATMAN: NINE LIVES, which is also up for Best Publication Design and Best Coloring by Matt Hollingsworth. Other multi-nominated DC titles include THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN, VOL. 2 (Best Limited Series, Best Penciller/Inker for Kevin O'Neill); PROMETHEA

(Best Penciller/Inker and Cover Artist for J. H. Williams III and Mick Gray, Best Coloring for Jeremy Cox); and last year's big winner, 100 BULLETS, which added two more notches to its extra-large belt with nods for Best Coloring (Patricia Mulvihill) and Cover Artist (SUPERMAN: RED SON's Dave Johnson). Even though the winners will be announced July 18, allow us to congratulate one and all here and now!

Once you've soaked up that California sun, we recommend joining the DCU Crew in the Windy City August 8-10 for WizardWorld Chicago. Among our legion of super-creators scheduled to appear are WizardWorld Guest of Honor Jim Lee, Geoff Johns, Judd Winick, Lee Bermejo, and Ed McGuinness, who's hard at work on the upcoming BATMAN/SUPERMAN monthly out this September! (Please note that due to forces beyond our control, convention guest lists are always subject to change!)

— your **MOLE** at 1700

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GOTHAM CENTRAL

"the most arresting read in comics"

WIZARD



"Fans of LAW AND ORDER and HOMICIDE: LIFE ON THE STREETS take note... the believable police drama has found its way into DC's stable. Highly Recommended"

- TheFourthRail.com

"realistic, gritty, real, and most importantly, a treat to read."

- Ain't It Cool News

"Gotham Central is off to a fantastic start [and] deserves to be one of DC's bestselling books."

- icomics.com

"...The best book DC has published for quite some time."

- SFX Magazine

Find out what everyone is talking about!

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